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URGES SPORTSMEN TO RECOVER WATERFOWL CRIPPLED BY GUNS

Pointing out the tremendous annual wastage in ducks and geese crippled or killed during the open shooting seasons and never recovered, W. C. Henderson, associate chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, in a statement issued today (October 14), on behalf of both the Advisory Board, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the bureau, urged American sportsmen to unite in a campaign to reduce these losses. The statement follows:

"Authorities estimate that for every two ducks killed and brought to bag, at least one bird is crippled and probably lost. This becomes appalling when it is realized that probably 15,000,000 ducks are counted into the bags of American gunners each season. It means that at least 7,500,000 birds are crippled and lost. They are not included in the gunner's bag, and they are not included in the numbers of birds that return north to rear young. In such cases the stock of breeding birds is thus seriously decreased without any resulting benefit, except to the creatures that prey on the unfortunate cripples.

"The picture is not a pleasant one. However, most of this inhumane and wasteful crippling can be prevented if gunners will refrain from shooting at birds at long range, and from using shotguns of a gauge too small to be effective.

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'Flock shooting,' the indiscriminate firing into a flock of birds in the air or on the water, is a prolific source of crippling and is properly regarded with disgust by experienced sportsmen.

"Every gunner should make conscientious efforts to recover his wounded birds. Those acquainted with the wildfowl situation are genuinely concerned over the relative scarcity of these birds, caused by overshooting and by a series of disastrous breeding seasons due to long-continued droughts. Every sign plainly indicates that the future of the sport of duck shooting depends entirely upon our ability to protect now the diminishing supply of breeding birds. Federal and State conservation authorities are applying emergency measures by restricting open seasons and reducing bag limits. It is strange that, with these evidences before their eyes, so many individual gunners make only half-hearted efforts to find and retrieve their crippled game. If, on the other hand, every gunner will do his utmost-- will in fact make it the first rule of sportsmanship to recover his wounded birds-- the number of breeding birds going north in spring will be larger by several millions than will be the case if this appeal is ignored.

"The supply of ducks is far too small to permit the least unnecessary wastage, and further restrictions on shooting privileges may be required unless every gunner does what he can to stop these pitiful losses. The least he can do is to adhere to sportsmanlike practices and save his own cripples."